



United States Department of Agriculture  
National Agricultural Statistics Service



# News Release

Cooperating with the Montana Department of Agriculture  
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## Farm Numbers and Land in Farms

Released: February 1, 2008

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There were 28,300 farms in Montana during 2007, up 200 from the previous year, according to the USDA, National Agricultural Statistics Service, Montana Field Office. Farms are sub-grouped by economic sales. The smallest economic sales category, \$1,000 to \$9,999, contains the largest number of farms at 11,800, up 500 farms from 2006. The next economic sales category, \$10,000 to \$99,999, had 10,500 farms in 2007 compared with 10,800 in 2006. For the economic sales category of \$100,000 to \$249,999, there were 3,600 farms, compared with 3,800 the previous year. The economic sales category of \$250,000 to \$499,999 shows 1,600 farms in 2007 compared with 1,500 last year. The number of farms in the highest economic sales class of \$500,000 or more had 800 farms, up 100 from 2006.

Land in farms is estimated at 60.0 million acres, down 100,000 acres from 2006. Montana's average farm size is 2,120 acres. Land in farms was also broken down by economic sales class. The breakdowns by sales category and percent change from the previous year are as follows: \$1,000 to \$9,999, 4.2 million acres, up 8 percent from last year; \$10,000 to \$99,999, 17.3 million acres, down 1 percent from 2006; \$100,000 to \$249,999, 17.4 million acres, down 3 percent from a year ago; \$250,000 to \$499,999, 11.8 million, unchanged; and \$500,000 or more, 9.3 million, up 4 percent from last year.

The number of farms in the United States in 2007 is estimated at 2.08 million, 0.6 percent fewer than in 2006. Total land in farms, at 930.9 million acres, decreased 1.5 million acres, or 0.16 percent, from 2006. The average farm size was 449 acres during 2007, an increase of three acres from the previous year. The decline in the number of farms and land in farms reflects a continuing consolidation in farming operations and diversion of agricultural land to nonagricultural uses.

Farm numbers declined in the \$1,000 - \$9,999 and the \$10,000 - \$99,999 sales classes. Farm numbers rose slightly in the three largest sales classes. The changes within the sales classes were a result of operations moving to larger sales classes by consolidation or expansion and rising incomes as result of strong commodity prices. Because of rising incomes, many farms and ranches near the top of their sales class in 2006 moved into the next higher sales class in 2007 without adding land or otherwise expanding their operations.

The largest percentage changes from 2006 occurred in the smallest and largest sales classes. Farm numbers declined 1.5 percent, to 1.14 million farms, in the \$1,000 - \$9,999 sales class. Meanwhile, farm numbers increased 4.4 percent, to 84,970 farms, in the \$500,000 and over sales class. The number of farms with less than \$100,000 in sales fell 1.2 percent from 2006 while the number of farms with \$100,000 or more in sales rose 2.2 percent.

Land in farms also shifted from lower sales classes to higher sales classes. In the \$1,000 - \$9,999 sales class, land in farms dropped 1.6 percent, to 112.8 million acres, while land operated by farms in the largest sales class, \$500,000 & over in sales, increased 1.8 percent, to 217.3 million acres.

Overall, the average farm size increased three acres in 2007. However, average farm sizes declined in some of the sales classes due to smaller farms moving up to higher sales classes.

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